

INDOT 2030 Plan Update Early Coordination Meeting Notes

NIRPC Meeting at Portage, IN May 28th 10:00 AM -12:20 PM

In Attendance: *Dan Gardener, NIRPC Executive Office*
Ken Dallmeyer, NIRPC Transportation Planning Section
Steve Strains, NIRPC Transportation Development
Bill Brown, NIRPC Transportation Planning
Mitch Barloga, NIRPC Transportation Planning
Steve Call, FTA Chicago Office
Dave Franklin, FHWA Indiana Division Office
Don Abraham, INDOT LaPorte District Office
Lisa Shrader, INDOT LaPorte District Office)
Steve Smith, INDOT Central Office, Planning
Roy Nunnally, INDOT, Central Office, Planning

Steve Smith kicked the meeting off discussing the meeting's purpose and expected outcome. The outline of the meeting was structured based on NIRPC response letter to the Early Coordination 2004 long range plan update letter sent to NIRPC in April. This letter requested INDOT Districts and MPO personnel to reevaluate major expansion projects in the INDOT 25-year plan for their areas and document changes in project priorities (changes in scope, and/or project deletion, delay, or advancement); identify new expansion projects to be evaluated for inclusion in INDOT's 2030 plan update; and develop a list of planning issues the MPO/District faces that should be addressed in the 2030 plan update. Listed below are topics/issues discussed.

PROJECT EVALUATION DISCUSSIONS

1. New Interchange Project, I-65/109th Ave. NIRPC notes that this project now has local consensus at the county/city level and political support for the 109th Ave location. NIRPC notes Congressman Visclosky has proposed to earmark \$8.4 million towards the construction cost for the new interchange at 109th Ave. The project is currently listed in the INDOT 25-Year Plan as a placeholder new interchange project at I-65/101st Ave and has serious local consensus issues relative to a location between US 231 and US 30. Last spring, Crown Point contracted with ACE Consultants to study the best possible location for the interchange, the study is currently ongoing. NIRPC recommends changing the project location in the INDOT plan from 101st Ave to 109th Ave. Local consensus issues for this project have essentially been resolved.

Comment: *The INDOT planning section will evaluate the recommended interchange location pending results from the interchange study and update the project description to reflect the recommended interchange location in our next 2030 full plan update. The INDOT planning section will continue coordination efforts with NIRPC relative to this proposed project.*

2. New Interchange Project I-94 and Porter/LaPorte County Line Road – This project was amended from the INDOT 25-year plan due to lack of local planning support and recommendation from the District. The project was recently resubmitted in the summer 2003 to be included in NIRPC's 2030 Plan. NIRPC notes that the project has not been fully evaluated as of yet and has asked that INDOT reevaluate the proposed interchange in the INDOT Statewide Interchange Study update. NIRPC will amend the project into their 2030 plan if the project is warranted.

Comment: *So far, the need for the proposed interchange has not been identified. The INDOT planning section will reevaluate the proposed interchange location in our upcoming Statewide Interchange Study update. Decisions to amend the project into the INDOT 2030 plan will be based on results from the interchange study and coordinating efforts between INDOT and NIRPC.*

3. New Interchanges on SR 49 at CR 400; CR 500; CR 600 – NIRPC notes that these interchanges are important to Valparaiso. INDOT has currently programmed a new interchange at CR 400, DES # 9700360, LRP # 272, RFC 2007. Both the district and MPO concur that despite interchange placement issues, CR 500 would be the logical location for a second interchange location for Valparaiso since it provides connectivity to a major east-west route. CR 600 does not have this connectivity do to wetlands/lakes to the west of SR 49.

Comment: *The INDOT planning section will evaluate the proposed interchange locations in our Statewide Interchange Study update.*

4. SR 55, Added Capacity/Relinquishment – NIRPC notes that this improvement has been requested by Merrillville, Lake County, and State Representative Dobis. No capacity issues have been identified in INDOT 2025 HERS_IN output or the 2030 model output. In the 2030 NB, SR 55 from Ridge Road to US 30 operates at LOS A-B, with the exception of the segment from US 30 to 77th Avenue which the model forecast an LOS D, and LOS C in the Build network. NIRPC view this project as part of a reliever route for the Borman since SR 55 connects to Ridge Road, a parallel route to the Borman. INDOT suggested that NIRPC/elected officials consult with INDOT's Relinquishment section for the proposed improvement/relinquishment. NIRPC notes that the project has not been fully evaluated.

Comment: *The project is beyond the scope of the Long Range Planning Section. Needs to add capacity on SR 55 from US 30 to Ridge Road have not been identified. Therefore, the project is a relinquishment issues and should be handled by INDOT's Relinquishment Specialist and Program Development*

5. Proposed SR 312 Extension – The City of Hammond requested this project to improve safety, and provide better connectivity to Illinois's Brainard Ave. NIRPC notes that SR 312 serves as a major truck route for raw materials and auto parts for steel mills and Ford Motors Plants in Illinois. NIRPC notes that the project has strong political support as well as invested interest from the Chicago region. The proposed project would eliminate two 90-degree turns at Sheffield Ave and Gostlin Street. NIRPC also notes that the proposed project has some serious consensus issues and have not been fully evaluated as of yet. Also Congressman Visclosky has plans to earmark \$4.2 million toward the cost of this project.

Comment: *The project currently has serious consensus issues and has not been officially proposed or requested for inclusion in INDOT's 2030 Plan. This project is also a relinquishment issue and should be handled coordinated with INDOT's Relinquishment Specialist and Program Development*

6. South Suburban Expressway (Illiana Expressway). NIRPC notes that the project still has consensus issues and will be evaluated in NIRPC's non-fiscally constraint project listing. We discussed rumors that Illinois has selected a preferred alignment for its portion of the proposed project. NIRPC notes that Illinois has a portion of the project in their 2030 plan which is the connector piece to SR 355. NIRPC notes that the underlying issue is the Chicago Third Area Airport issue between the Gary/Chicago Airport area and the proposed Peotone Airport Location.

Comment: *INDOT is coordinating efforts with NIRPC who will have the lead for developing consensus for the proposed project.*

7. Added Travel Lanes US 6 from SR 149 to SR 49 – INDOT notes that technical analysis does not support adding travel lanes to this segment at the 2007 RFC date listed in the INDOT 25-year plan. INDOT suggested breaking the project into two projects for the 2015 to 2021 time frame. NIRPC notes that its 2030 regional model does not identify capacity issues by 2030. The district recommends advanced ROW acquisition for 4-lanes in the future and possibly implementing some type of access management strategy to preserve LOS.

Comment: *The project has been suspended in SPMS. The INDOT Planning Section will removed the project from the INDOT transportation plan project list and incorporate two project for the SR 149 to SR 49 segment. Also, NIRPC notes added travel lanes are not needed and recommends a continuous left-turn lane, plus access management strategies to preserve peak LOS.*

8. CR 300 W (SR 149) Extension from SR 130 to US 30 – INDOT explained that this project will be removed from our 2030 plan due to the significant project cost increase from \$4 to \$32 million. Demonstration funds earmarked for this project will be redistributed to the proposed SR 312 extension project. NIRPC notes the project will not be included in their 2030 project listing.

Comment: *No Comments*

9. LaPorte Bypass – NIRPC notes that the LaPorte County Economic Development Coalition is interested in an eastern LaPorte bypass starting connecting SR 35 south of LaPorte to Boyd Blvd to SR 2, extending Boyd Blvd to W. Severes Rd., which connects to SR 39 and US 35. Ken mentioned in earlier conversation that elected official Chocola has plans to earmark funds for a LaPorte Bypass Study.

Comment: *No Comments*

PLANNING ISSUES

- Heavy Duty Truck Routes – NIRPC notes that Indiana's heavy duty truck network is not located on the NHS. NIRPC notes that this presents a major problem in the region, particularly in urbanized area in which most of the network traverses. NIRPC used US 12/20 and the Gary Metropolitan area as a prime example. NIRPC raised the question if it were possible for INDOT to re-route the heavy duty truck network to NHS routes. INDOT replied; the issue is also a multimodal issue and could be evaluated closer in the upcoming Multimodal Plan Update.

OTHER ISSUES

- Based on input from the LaPorte District/Sub-District Offices relative to INDOT's request for the evaluation of major expansion projects listed in the INDOT 25-year plan, the district proposed provided information relative to project extension/changes in scope. The remainder of the meeting was used to obtain additional input from NIRPC.
 - SR 53, LRP project # 307, Added Travel Lanes from 109th Ave to 93rd Ave. District suggested extending this project limit to US 231 for connectivity purposes. NIRPC did not have a problem with this request.
 - US 41, LRP Project # 448, Added Travel Lanes from 93rd Ave to 77th Ave. The district recommended changing the project type to Median Construction, continuous turn lane and extending the project limit to US 231 for connectivity purposes. NIRPC concurred.
 - SR 912, LRP Project # 439, Added Travel Lanes from just north of the Borman to just north of US 12. In recent discussion, this project was identified as not being needed. However, SR 912 needs to be reconstructed. SR 912 is essentially an elevated facility. NIRPC notes that reconstruction is expensive and adding a travel lane is relatively inexpensive during reconstruction then adding lanes later and recommends that the scope of the project remain unchanged. INDOT currently list the project in the 25-year plan with a 2008 RFC date and a \$100 million price tag. INDOT 2030 build network shows a LOS D&E.
 - US 20, LRP Project # 573, Added Travel Lanes (4-6 lanes) from US 421 to US 35/SR 212 in Michigan City, RFC Date 2008. The district notes that a Median Construction type project (continuous left turn lane) would solve current congestion problems.